



Revolutionary Doctor, Mass Communication

The National Planning Commission: Draft National Development Plan

NDP Chapter 10 on Health

Attached is a PDF file, formatted for printing as an A5 booklet, made up of extracts from Chapter 10, Promoting Health, from the draft National Development plan. It has been formatted in this way for use as a short discussion text in the "Development" course of the Communist University.

This NDP chapter on Health seems to be more concrete (in the Hegelian and Marxist sense) than other chapters we have looked at from the NDP. The parts of this chapter make up an organic whole. It appears to be more of a plan and less of a wish-list.

This may be because of the considerable amount of serious research that has been done in government, in the ANC, in the SACP, and by unions such as NEHAWU, with a view to creating a National Health Insurance scheme, to which the ANC is committed, as is the current minister of Health, Cde Aaron Motsoaledi.

This post is an edited version of the previous iteration, and is still a discussion of the draft.

The full chapter in the published (not draft) NDP, 2.5 MB in size, can be downloaded by clicking [here](#).

The NDP, Overall

What did the National Development Plan drafting process achieve, overall? It is not revolutionary and it can barely be called “progressive”. It is incremental and gradualist. It is a linear extrapolation from the present, and it is not a dialectical or concrete conception. In that way, we can say that it is not even scientific.

But South Africa’s draft National Development Plan is at least an attempt to look forward. So to that extent it represents a rejection of *laissez-faire* (let-it-be), and it embraces *dirigisme* (steering, or “intervention”). For this much, and it is not a small thing, we should be grateful.

The NPC had an advantageous position within the Presidency, and it had the presumed support of its 26

members, who were prominent people in many walks of life. But the NPC had no big battalions. It also lacked the practice of public dialogue, which deficiency was apparent when it tried to communicate. So it was never likely to be able to do very much more than what it did; and in 2015, it was stood down. In 2015, we continue to await its replacement, which the SACP has said should be a permanent planning commission.

“Policy” will in practice be driven by the kind of action that NEHAWU and other agents have undertaken over the years, which produced the body of thought in the field of health that the NPC was obliged to take into consideration. The NPC then acted as an aggregator, and not as an initiator; and this may be how things will proceed all around, i.e. that the NPC, or its future equivalent, will endorse and sanctify initiatives that come from outside of itself. These include the Industrial Policy Action Plan, The New Growth Path, and the Infrastructure Development Plan, all initiated and led by the ANC government.

Thus, the living democracy of the mass democratic movement, within the framework of the National Democratic Revolution, will continue to have priority in determining the country’s future.

Initiative is Dialogue?

The leaders of the NPC were not very good communicators. The documents that they sent out were extremely difficult to

handle, and continued to be difficult to handle even after many complaints.

Their attempts to communicate using innovative (so-called “social”) media did not take them towards dialogue, but towards proselytising and indoctrination.

In the world of popular communications, the NPC was unable to improve on the patronising, condescending tone of “tips for Trevor”.

Whereas the ANC’s Policy Conference, for example, is the apex of a dialogic pyramid that goes, via ANC branches and sub-Branches, all the way down to localities all over the country; while on the other side it has a majority in parliament and a firm hold on the executive government.

The ANC is closely linked to other dialogical agents, including the SACP, and with other trade unions apart from NEHAWU and SADTU, which we have already mentioned.

This combined alliance mechanism can, and does, produce real dialogue, and it is incomparably larger than any other organised public mass in South Africa. It is by itself a medium of mass communication, and a larger one by far than any other in the country.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [National Plan, C10, Promoting Health – extract](#).
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